

There are a few different ways to set up some web presence:

- 1) Learn to use web editing software (eg Nvu, eXe, Dreamweaver, Front Page, Word, and upload the whole thing, page by page, using FTP eg Nvu, FileZilla);
- 2) use a content management system (CMS), or a learning management system (LMS), such as Joomla, Moodle, Mambo, Mediawiki, Drupal, Civicspace, Eduspaces; and adapt the look and functionality with style sheets and plugins;
- 3) use a combination of web-based applications, (commonly referred to as 'web2') hosted on other people's servers (eg Pbwiki, Odeo, Blogger, Edublogs)

Benefits and Pitfalls of each:

1) *build your own:*

Learn to use web editing software (eg Nvu, eXe, Dreamweaver, Front Page, Word, and upload the whole thing, page by page, using FTP eg Nvu, FileZilla);

benefits	challenges / pitfalls
<ul style="list-style-type: none">» one person has complete control over the site;» if you have a great designer with plenty of experience, you'll be able to create something really swish;» if your design team has a great programmer, you'll be able to add in a range of functions too;» if you use a programming language, like PHP, you can include menu, header, footer across the site.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">» often one person has control;» if a team is involved in maintaining the site, you'll need some communication system to determine who's edited which page (or you'll need to remember to download the existing page, before editing and uploading again);» it can be difficult to build in collaborative tools, when you're designing a site page by page;» changes to the site can be slow, (especially if you rely on a single webmaster) as you need to have your editing software with you, and a portable uploading tool;» NVU may be free, and great for making single pages, and small sites, but it doesn't have the power of eg dreamweaver for building an extensible and highly navigable site (building an effective navigation system is often the hardest part of designing your own site, although there are menu apps you can plugin);» difficult to hand over control to other people, unless you've designed the site really well, with good folder structure, naming conventions and documentation;» Using this system, a really good functional web site takes considerable time energy and resources to build, and requires continued access to your design/programming team; (ideally you'll have a design committee too);» unless your team has plenty of prior experience, you'll need to learn about: effective visual and structural design, web standards including style sheets (xhtml/css), navigation systems, accessibility for people with disabilities, ways to include recurring elements within each page;» if you use a programming language, like PHP, you need to be careful about security; scripts can be hacked.

2) use a CMS/ LMS:

use a content management system (CMS), or a learning management system (LMS), such as Joomla, Moodle, Mambo, Mediawiki, Drupal, Civicspace, Eduspaces; and adapt the look and functionality with style sheets and plugins;

benefits	challenges / pitfalls
<ul style="list-style-type: none">» There are many existing web applications, several of them free and open source, with plenty of functionality out of the box;» usually you can have login systems, forums, navigation menus, and text/ publishing tools, all ready to go, so that many people can edit pages within the site, from within their web browser;» still possible to edit page content in eg NVU, and upload separately;» some hosting deals let you install systems with one-click.» it should be a lot cheaper to pay a designer and programmer to adapt an existing app to your needs, than to design one from scratch;» most of these web apps have online communities of volunteers dedicated to finding solutions;» There are places that will host moodle for you (eg brightcookie), or you could use eg groups.edna.edu.au for hosted forums: they offer branding for a small fee.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">» you'll need a decent hosting deal (our provider offers good free community hosting for non-profit orgs);» must have access to web server database; (if you're paying for web hosting you'll have all this anyway);» need to have access to a programmer if things go wrong.

3) use a combination of hosted wiki, blog, podcast etc

use a combination of web-based applications, (often referred to as 'web2') hosted on other people's servers (eg Pbwiki, Odeo, Blogger, Edublogs, YouTube, Slideshare, GooglePages)

benefits	challenges / pitfalls
<ul style="list-style-type: none">» easiest by far to set up;» can use a wiki (eg pbwiki, wikispaces) as your primary web presence, and embed other things into this space (eg audio, video, ppt presentations, blog headlines);» Many people can have editing rights,» discussion tools are often built into the wiki environment;	<ul style="list-style-type: none">» all your data is hosted on someone else's server, so you need to backup regularly, in case they go down unexpectedly;» (although this could happen with any hosting arrangement) ..

for either (1) or (3), you can:

- » combine with free forum or hosted moodle (eg groups.edna.edu.au for more private discussions;
- » use your web space space to link out to live sessions (eg in illuminate);
- » use RSS to include headings from other places (eg using feedjumbler).

Having done (1) for years, my preference is usually (2) or (3), kind regards, michael